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## Inside

### Features

Maclean's on UPEI  
UPEI Marketing  
Memorial Asks for  
Government Help  
Kiss A Pig?  
Teaching Awards

### Sports

Panthers Making  
Leaders Nervous  
Face Off  
Around the Rim

### Columns

Dig this!  
What's up at the  
Panther Lounge

### Plus

Personals  
Campus Comment  
Employment Opps  
Financial Aid  
Unclassifieds  
Student Exchanges  
Magnum PEI  
More!

# CIMN vs Student Union

## Communication Breakdown Results in Emergency Meeting

by Steve Ellis

Football was not the only game afield on January 28. Superbowl Sunday also saw student-run CIMN Radio and the UPEI Student Union Council go head-to-head on the issue of CIMN's proposal to become an FM broadcaster later this year.

At their January 21 meeting, council had been presented a Plan of Action to realize the proposed switch to FM from the current hard-to-access format. After taking time to individually read through the plan, the members of the executive were alarmed.

"We decided to have an emergency executive meeting about it," said Student Union VP Internal, Tara Inman, "because we looked at the financial aspect and there was a lot in there that was scaring us."

The financial scare was due to an inflated operating budget. According to the plan of action drawn up by former CIMN Station Manager Amanda Hill, the change of format was going to cause the stations budget to more than double from its regular \$12,000-\$14,000 to a whopping \$34,000.

Also worrying the executive was CIMN's plan to accept paid religious programming, which had been rumoured to have anti-homosexual and anti-abortion themes.

As a result of these worries, the executive issued a letter informing CIMN of their intention to put a freeze on the orders for their FM broadcasting equipment. "Things just felt like they were going a little too fast," explained Inman.

This inspired the resignation of

Amanda Hill on Friday January 26. Hill had been doing a lot of the policy work leading up to the FM licensing.

Heading into the meeting, CIMN had fears of their own. "We were afraid they were going to deny us the 10,000 dollars [for FM broadcasting equipment]" explained Melissa Buote, former Program Manager and newly appointed acting Station Manager.

At the emergency meeting it quickly became clear that the whole FM licensing process had been fraught with miscommunications, and more importantly a lack of communication between CIMN and the Student Union.

The only records of council involvement in the licensing process dated back to October 1993. At the October 3 council meeting, then CIMN Station Manager, Rory O'Connor had announced his intentions of acquiring an FM licence for CIMN, and on October 17 a motion was passed giving approval for O'Connor to pursue his intentions. No other formal communication was noted until over two years later when the proposed Plan of Action was presented on January 21, 1996.

According to Buote, the Plan of Action was presented to council prematurely. Most CIMN employees had not had an adequate chance to review the document beforehand. "There was a lack of communication in CIMN itself within the management," Buote said.

Inman was pleased to hear that CIMN was not steadfast in support

of the plan. "Five minutes into the meeting when Melissa announced that CIMN does not agree with the proposed financial statement and the plan of action and the religious broadcasting contract, I said 'Phew! There's a lot of weight off my shoulders.'"

Once it was established that both CIMN and the Student Union held the same views on the Plan of Action, the meeting became much friendlier. It was not a question of whether or not CIMN would start to broadcast on FM, but rather when.

The two groups plan to work together during the next couple of weeks to come up with a new Plan of Action, with a more accurate budget and statement of goals.

CIMN will also be applying to the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for an extension of the date by which it must have switched to the new FM format. This is in order to allow time to work out any problems which may arise in the future.

Despite recent problems, Buote still hopes that the station will be broadcasting to the entire Charlottetown area by March.

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